

**Meeting Summary
California Biodiversity Council
Thursday, October 23, 2003
Federal Building, Sacramento, CA**

Attendees:

Council Members:

Mary Nichols (RA)	Mark Hite (CDF)	Wes Pratt (CCC)
Tony Danna (BLM)	Tom Howard (SWRCB)	Rick Rayburn (DPR)
Bill Douros (MBNMS)	Chris Marxen (CalEPA)	Steve Verigin (DWR)
Dave Gibbons (USFS)	Robert Meacher (RCRC)	Larry Week (DFG)
Alex Glazer (UC)	Jim Shevock (NPS)	Colonel Wendell (USMC)
Jerry Harmon (SANDAG)	Dennis O'Bryant (DOC)	Hank Wyman (CARCD)
Bob Haussler (CEC)		

Others in Attendance:

Dave Baillie, USMC	John Hofmann, RCRC
Helen Birss, CDFG	Tom Howard
Cathy Bleier, Resources Agency	Chris Keithley, FRAP, CDF
John Brodie, San Joaquin County RCD	Luana E. Kiger, USDA, Natural
Roger Buttermore, U.S. FWS	Resources Conservation Service
Mike Chapel, USDA Forest Service	Rick Leong
Joan Clayburgh, Sierra Nevada Alliance	Susan Levitsky, CDFG
Ken Coulter, SWRCB	Quinqin Liu
Bill Craven, Senate Natural Resources	Stefan Lorenzato, CDWR
Committee	Deb Merchant, For Sake of the Salmon
Brenda K. Deno, BLM	Bob Neale, Sustainable Conservation
Brock Dolman, West County Watershed	Christine Nota, USDA Forest Service
Network	Leslie Pierce, CDWR
Kathleen Eagan, Truckee Watershed	Bell Queens
Council	Larry Rodriguez, Robertson-Bryan Inc.
John Ellison, Resources Agency	Larry Ruth, Wildland Resource Center,
Laurie Fenwood	University of California
Ted Frink	Jim Shevock, National Park Service,
Madelyn Glickfeld, Resources Agency	Pacific West
Kean S. Goh, Dept of Pesticide	David Siedband, Wolf and Associates
Regulation	Margaret Stelmok, Sutter County Dept.
Randy Gould, USDA Forest Service	of Agriculture
Joyce Gutstein, UC Davis Public Service	Luree Stetson, Resources Agency
Research Program	Bill Stewart, FRAP, CDF
Bob Harris, Sacramento River	Kevin Ward, Information Center for the
Watershed Program	Environment, UC Davis
Steve Haze, Millerton Watershed/Sierra	Bruce Wilcox
Foothill Conservancy	Betty Yee
Russ Henly, FRAP, CDF	Stanley Young, Resources Agency
Dale Hoffman-Floerke, CDWR	

Council Announcements

Rick Rayburn – Mr. Rayburn announced that the acquisition of the property at the Sutter Buttes by the Department of Parks and Recreation has been completed. Public access will begin in the spring.

Laurie Fenwood – Distributed information on the Forest Service's Enterprise Program.

Dave Baillie – Mr. Baillie presented a project concept paper for addressing conservation at the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station. The Navy is seeking partners to help conserve private property that is scheduled for development within the facility.

Steve Verigin – Mr. Verigin reminded the CBC that the Quantification Settlement Agreement for managing California's portion of the Colorado River has been signed by all parties. A \$20 million program to study restoration options for the Salton Sea will also begin soon.

Report from the Executive Committee (Chris Nota)

Chris introduced the Council to Lauren McNees who is their new Communications Coordinator. She also announced that the next meeting of the CBC will be in Santa Cruz on February 17-18. The focus of the meeting will be on implementing new state and federal initiatives for ocean management, including links with watercourse management on land. New biodiversity discoveries in the ocean may be a subject of a field tour at Santa Cruz.

Ms. Nota recapped the field trip to the Moklume River and the dinner to honor Mary Nichols and other state officials that will be leaving soon. She noted that this will be the last meeting for long-time CBC member Bob Haussler who will be retiring from the California Energy Commission soon. Chris reminded everyone to pay due and to attend the next Executive Committee meeting on Thursday, November 6.

Review of California Watershed Council (Luree Stetson)

Luree explained that the California Watershed Council was established by the Resources Agency and Cal/EPA to implement the Watersheds, Clean Beaches and Water Quality Act (AB 2534, Pavley, 2002). This legislation established a new program, the Integrated Watershed Management Program (IWMP), for the purposes of improving water quality, fisheries and habitat, water supply reliability, river corridor recreation, forest and fuels management, and hydropower management, for reducing flooding, and for controlling erosion and sedimentation. It also required an MOU between the Agencies to ensure coordination with other programs and the establishment of a public stakeholder advisory process.

The California Watershed Council was established on August 28, 2003 to serve as the public advisory process required by AB 2534. It is designed to recommend priorities and

funding allocation needs for the new program, and also to advise the Secretaries on watershed programs and related issues such as funding opportunities, program effectiveness and efficiencies, regional partnership needs, technical assistance and capacity building for watershed groups and citizen volunteers, information exchange, and implementation of the California Watershed Strategic Plan.

The major focus in the first year will be establishment of new watershed programs, review of existing fund programs for better coordination/integration of program elements, improved data information access for program decision-makers and the public, and examination of other issues identified by the Council. Four major work groups were established to address watershed program coordination and improvement needs on the following subjects: Economics and funding, Integrated Planning, Education, Outreach and Capacity Building, Data and Information Exchange. A fifth work group will manage processes and procedures for supporting the Council.

Panel Discussion: Watershed Groups Successes and Challenges

(Moderator: Allen Hawthorne – California Watershed Network)

Kathleen Eagan (Truckee River Watershed Council)

Kathleen described the Truckee watershed and the Truckee River Watershed Council. The basin's economy is based on outdoor recreation. There has been a long history of disputes over uses of the river. The council facilitates collaborative solutions to issues and opportunities. They have completed over 50 restoration projects. Building personal relationships with the permitting agencies has helped shorten the permit process. Volunteers complete much of the restoration work on the river and many agencies provide staff and funding. The primary challenge for this group is securing long-term funding for their watershed coordinator position. An improved comprehensive assessment of the Truckee River watershed would also help guide priorities for project planning and implementation.

Brock Dolman (West County Watershed Network)

Mr. Dolman explained that he is a wildlife biologist by training who has discovered that developing stronger relationships among people is the key to successful long-term conservation. He has devoted his attention to providing better education to citizen groups in watersheds about natural resources issues locally. Success is reached when there is an "educated and trusting" citizenry. Mr. Dolman's group has made a major effort to educate people within Sonoma County about water and watershed issues.

Bob Harris (Sacramento River Watershed Program)

Mr. Harris made some observations about his association with four watershed-based organizations. All seem to have challenges with funding for coordinators and projects, lengthy permitting process, and coordination with local agencies. He supports the efforts by the state to form the California Watershed Council which improve and coordinate state services to local watershed groups. A streamlined RFP proposal process would be

very helpful. Mr. Harris recommended expediting the agricultural waiver process and focusing agency attention on cooperation rather than more regulation.

Panel Discussion: Government and Non-Profit Services to Watershed that Enhances Local Watershed Efforts (Moderator: Cathy Bleier)

Stefan Lorezato (California Department of Water Resources)

The Watershed Program at DWR is relatively new and was developed to assist the CalFed Watershed Program. The focus is to help build local capacity for planning and issue resolution. The agency works closely with the Clean Water Team at the SWRCB to promote education and outreach locally. Promoting environmental justice considerations is a major interest now.

Ken Coulter (State Water Resources Control Board)

Regional Water Boards have been supporting watershed coordination and planning for many years. The SWRCB has many programs for this focus. Ken summarized two programs. The Citizen Monitoring Program assists local volunteer monitoring work with a three-member Clean Water Team. In addition the Board's grant program is distributing hundreds of millions of dollars in grant money for local watershed work.

Helen Birss (California Department of Fish and Game)

Ms. Birss provided a handout that described the DFG's Fisheries and Grants Restoration Program. The focus is the coastal areas of California. The program is supported by a staff of forty people, largely through facilitation of planning at the local level. Completed basin plans are the desired source for prioritizing projects for program funding.

Luana Kiger (Natural Resources Conservation Service)

Luana described the Small Watershed Protection Program which supports watershed restoration and protection on private lands. The work is done in cooperation with local Resource Conservation Districts). The program provides technical assistance and facilitation for local planning and implementation.

Deb Merchant (For the Sake of the Salmon)

The focus for this NGO is technical and capacity building support to local efforts that involve salmon habitat restoration. The group works in all coastal states in the western United States. Coordination across state efforts is also provided. A list of accomplishments for 2003 was distributed, including a workshop on fish passage which is being co-hosted with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The group is also developing a directory of technical assistance sources as a reference for local watershed groups.

Bob Neale (Sustainable Conservation)

Mr. Neale described his non-profit which is developing techniques for streamlining the process for acquiring agency permits. The goal is to make the permitting process faster while maintaining a high level of environmental protection. Sustainable Conservation works with local regulatory agencies to identify standard practices that can be

incorporated into a permit for individual watersheds. These practices can then be adopted locally without new permits. This approach also saves the agencies valuable review time without sacrificing desired environmental protections.

Joan Clayburgh (Sierra Alliance)

Ms. Clayburgh explained that the SNA is making a major effort to support local watershed collaboration in the Sierra Nevada. They are an advocate for the Sierra Region and a network for environment interests involved in local watershed groups. The Alliance also provides assistance to local watershed groups in the preparation of grant applications. They currently have a grant for \$500,000. Most of the money will be reallocated to local groups for citizen monitoring and training. A review of stakeholder-led projects for addressing TMDLs will also be completed with these funds. Joan recommended that agencies explore the feasibility of distributing grants through NGOs as an alternative to agency-led distribution programs. She argued that NGOs may be able to distribute funds more quickly while not sacrificing any of the requirements of granting agencies/

Discussion

(Moderator: Mary Nichols)

Russ Henly provided a quick update on the development of the California Watershed Assessment Manual. Roughly 25% of the document has been drafted. The first volume is scheduled for release in the Spring of 2004.

Cathy Bleier asked how “coordination of the agency and NGO coordinators” at the local level is being handled. Bob Harris suggested that this function occurs at the local watershed group where the groups have representation of all the key agencies and groups. Mary Nichols suggested that the California Watershed Portal might be improved to handle standardization of information and services. Stephan stated that promotion of locally-led comprehensive basin plans will drive better coordination. Kathleen agreed and recommended that agencies focus more priority on local groups while specifically offering the staff that have strong skills for working in diverse groups.

Rick Rayburn asked how agencies and local groups should maintain the work that has been invested in watershed restoration. Stefan and others suggested that building local ownership in the long-term plan and the associated projects is the best way insure that maintenance occurs over the long term. John Bride offered that, on private land, maintenance can be arranged by making it a condition of agency funding for the restoration work.

Two participants suggested that more attention should be given to involving academic interests in the statewide watershed efforts. Many supported the suggestion.